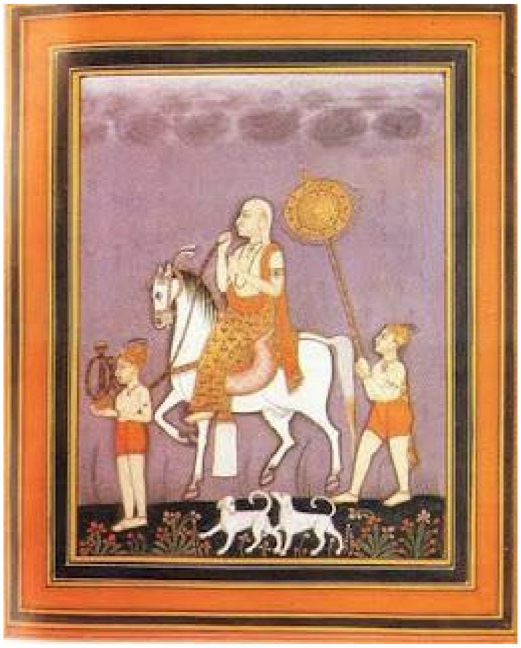
Chatrapati Shahu



Shahu was the son of Chatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and his Queen Yesubai (and the grandson of the great Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj).
He was born in 1682. His birthname was Shivaji (after his illustrious grandfather).
Soon after the execution of his father at the hands of the Mughals, Shahu and his mother Yesubai were taken away as prisoners (after the fall of fort Raigad).
Shahu was therefore raised in Mughal captivity.

Note: Fort Raigad was handed over to the mughals by its killedar Suryaji Pisal along with the queen Yesubai and the young prince Shahu, in return for the Sardeshmukhi of Wai. Years later, when Shahu returned, the first thing he did was to execute the traitor, Suryaji Pisal and many of his family members.

Aurangzeb had wanted to convert Shahu to Islam, but on the request of his daughter Zinatunnisa, Aurangzeb agreed to accept Khanderao Gujar, a son of Prataprao Gujar, as a convert instead.
It is said that it was Aurangzeb who named the child as 'Sahu' or the good one. It later changed to 'Shahu' and was used permanently by the king.

Note: Shahu also had a elder sister named Bhavanibai. She was married to Shankaraji Mahadik.

Release from captivity

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Shahu was released (18th May 1707) by his son Prince Azam at the advice of his commander Zulfikar Khan. Shahu was given by prince Azam the royal insignia, maratha guards and entourage(notably Mahadji Krishna Joshi and Gadadhar Pralhad Nasikkar) and also Sardeshmukhi (revenue collection) rights over six Deccan subahs along with Gujrat ,Gondwana and Tanjore. Shahu collected a small army on the way and arms from a

chieftain of Bijagad , Mohan singh Rawal. The idea was that it should prove as a goodwill gesture towards the Marathas (and blunt the maratha aggression) and perhaps also to create a succession war in the Maratha camp (and divide the maratha ranks).
Predictably the dowager queen Tarabai rejected Shahus claim to the throne . It is to be noted that, Tarabais deceased husband Rajaram had earlier claimed that he was ruling only as an representative of Shahu who was held in mughal captivity.
On the way,a few marathas joined Shahu viz.
Amritrao Kadam Bande, Sujan singh Rawal,Nemaji Shinde, Bokil, and Purandare.
Meanwhile Bahadur Shah aka Muazzam was crowned emperor of Delhi after superceding his brothers Azam from Ahmednagar and Kam Baksh from Hyderabad. Bahadur Shah (Shah Alam) maintained a equidistance from both Tarabai and Shahu and was non commital about prince Azams promise of Sardeshmukhi to Shahu.
Meanwhile a bitter battle for succession ensued between Shahu and Tarabai . The other contender being Sambhaji II, the son of Rajaram from his queen Rajasabai.
However, Shahus mother , Yesubai contiued to remain in the mughal prison as a collateral until 1719 (Shahus wife Savitribai, half brother Madansingh also remained as hostages with the Mughals).
This remained the case, until the Maratha power streangthened , forcing the Mughals to release the Queen mother and other family members unconditionally.

Shahu the Chattrapati

Shahu succeeded the Maratha throne (with Satara as his capital, 1708) at the age of twenty six with the help of Balaji Vishwanath ,an astute diplomat who was in the service of Dhanaji Jadhav, the maratha commander in chief. Balaji Vishwanath joined Shahus cause, once e was convinced that he was indeed the son of Sambhajiraje and not some imposter.

Note:Shahu virtually built the city of Satara below the fort Ajinkyatara.

Shahus foes

Balaji Vishwanath managed to bring over many of Tarabais aides, over to Shahus side, including Dhanaji Jadhav(after battle of Khed in Nov, 1707), forcing Tarabai to agree to a compromise. She accepted Shahu as the king of the Marathas and in return Tarabai was allowed to create her own state of Kolhapur from where she created an independent throne.
In 1713, Kanhoji Angre an ally of Tarabai made a swift atatck on Satara, and making Shahus peshwa, Bahiroji Pingale, a prisoner.
Shahu then made Balaji Vishwanath his Peshwa.
Balaji Vishwanth, then himself pursued Kanhoji Angre right upto Lohagad his headquarters and rendered him in a precarious position. Balaji understood the importance of a man like Kanhoji Angre on their good side, therefore, instead of fighting the enemy , Balaji prefered diplomacy instead .He promised Kanhoji military help against his arch rivals the Siddis and the Portuguese. In return for Angre accepting Shahu as his overlord, Angre was allowed to keep his territories and also named the Maratha Sarkhel (Admiral).
Balaji even subdued other defiant maratha sardars like Dhamaji Thorat,Krishnarao Khatavkar,Chandrasen Jadhav,Pant Pratinidhi,Santaji Jadhav and Udaji Chavan and ensured the supremacy of his master.

Shahus negatives and positives

Since Shahu was brought up in captivity, he wasn't made aware about the nuances of administration nor about the tactics used in warfare. Therefore, all his affairs were carried forward by his Peshwas viz. Balaji Vishwanath,and later by his competent son Bajirao I and finally his grandson, Balaji Bajirao. But they continued to owe their alleigence to Shahu.
After Shahus death the Chatrapatis of Satara remained only titular rulers while the real power was wielded by the Peshwas.
Shahu was a good judge of character , a benevolent king and an excellent man manager.With his congeniality he was able to acquire the loyalty of many competent people (like the Bhosales of Nagpur,the Holkars ,the Shindes,the Gaekwads etc) who saw to it that Maratha dominance reached its zenith during the reign of Shahu.He always believed in accomodation rather than confrontation and often proved to be a foil for his refractory generals.
Shahu was truly a secular king who was comfortable with muslim customs (probabbly due to his mughal captivity)as well as his hindu ones. He was fond of hunting, breeding horses, hunting hounds etc.

Maratha Empire during Shahu's reign

Maratha dominance extended beyond the boundaries of Maharashtra and into other western regions (Gujrat) and parts of central India (Madhya Pradesh,Jharkhand)and to the east (Orissa,Bengal) and also upto Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in the south. They ruled many provinces (Indore,Baroda,Gwalior) in different parts of India, and also collecting Chauth (revenues) from many.
Though officially Shahu claimed loyalty to the emperors of Delhi , it was a fact that the Mughal emperors (post Farukhsiyar) themselves looked towards the Marathas for their preservation. The Marathas played a prominent role in installing and deposing emperors at Delhi.

Shahus family

Shahuji had four wives(Sakwarbai, Sagunabai, Ambikabai,Savitribai) and three concubines, and fathered four sons (one son by Sagunabai died in infancy. Shahu had two sons(Yesaji and Kusoji from Laxmibai) and four daughters through his concubines)and two daughters(through Sagunabai and Sakwarbai). He adopted two sons, Fatehsinh I Bhonsle and afterwards Rajaram II (grandson of his uncle Rajaram) in 1745 (who succeeded him as the Chatrapati at Satara).
During his last years, Shahu renunciated the luxuries of his palace and spent life as a reclusive hermit.

Death

Shahu breathed his last at rangmahal in Satara on 15 th Dec 1749 .

List of the Post Shahu Chatrapatis of Satara

Ramraja or Rajaram II (1749-1777) was the putative grandson of Rajaram (uncle of Shahu) and Tarabai. Tarabai presented Ramraja before Chatrapati Shahu as her grandson, explaining that she had kept him hidden to protect him against any assassination attempts by her rivals. Shahu having no heir wanted to adopt a child as his successor from the Bhosale family of Nagpur. But Tarabai reasoned with him, that when a direct descendent was available, why should he adopt someone from outside his immediate family? Thus Shahu adopted Ramraja and declared him his successor. Tarabai had hoped that Ramraja would be a puppet in her hands and she would control the throne of Satara, but Ramraja proved unyielding. So Tarabai denounced him as an imposter and even imprisoned him by deceit.

During the reign of Ramraja, the Maratha power was largely controlled by the Peshwas.

Shahu II (1777-1808) or Aba sahib was the adopted son and successor of Ramraja. He was adopted by Ramraja just before his death in 1777. Shahu II was born as Vithoji Bhosale ,his biological father being Trimbakjiraje Bhosale of Wavi. Shahu II was only a titular king and like his predecessor, the real power rested with the Peshwa. Shahu II died on 4th May 1808.

Pratapsinha (1808-1839) was the eldest son and successor of Shahu II. Since he became king at a young age , his affairs were managed by his mother Anandibai. Her relations with the Peshwa Bajirao II were initially cordial, barring letters of complaint about their inadequate allowance. Shortly before the first Anglo Maratha war, Peshwa Bajirao II kept Pratapsinha an virtual prisoner in the Wasota fort of Satara. The reasons being that the Peshwa was losing support from his Maratha sardars. Hence he wanted to keep the king under his control. Also the Peshwa had received reports of Pratapsinhas secret conspiracies with the British resident to free him of the Peshwas control. But by 1818, Pratapsinha had already started secret negotiations with Governor of Bombay, Elphinstone through his confidantes Narsu Jamadar and Balwant Malhar Chitnis. The British soon took over Satara and Pratapsinha was reinstated as the Chatrapati in 10th April 1818. As per a reaty between Pratapsinha and the company in 1819, James Grant was made the Resident of the British East India Company. James Grant trained the king in the intricacies of administration, which so far he had been kept deprived of by the Peshwa. It was also decided that after the Raja was sufficiently trained in administration, power would be passed gradually over to him. On 5th April 1822, the king was formally handed over his seal, and the fort of Pratapgad was ceded to him . James Grant also took leave of the king and left for England. After Grant there were many more British political agents. John Briggs in 1823 , William Simpson in Dec 1826, A.Robertson in June 1827,Lodwick in 1832.
Pratapsinha shared a cordial relationship with all these residents, all of whom who had only praise for this eager, congenial, well meaning young king.
But post 1832, differences between the British East India company and the king started emerging. The king was feeling deprived and slighted over his jurisdiction. Charges were hurled against each other by both the parties, each accusing each other of violation of the understanding between them. The king was accused of a hostilities against the company, charges which the king vehemently denied. Finally on 5th Sept 1839, the British East India company dethroned the Pratapsinha and instated the next of his kin (Pratapsinhas brother Shahaji aka Appasaheb)to on the throne of Satara. The king was also banished from his kingdom and exiled to Benaras. He and his dependents were to lead their lives on a stipulated pension to take care of their sustinence.

Pratapsinha died in Benaras on 14th Oct 1847.
Shahaji aka Sayaji aka Appasaheb (1839-1848) was the brother and successor (1839) to Pratapsinha. He had a reign of seven years under the British resident Charles Ovans, until his death on 5th April 1848.
Shahaji had adopted a son, Venkoji (aka Bhauaheb aka Venkatji) on his deathbed. But he was deposed in 1848 itself as the British refused to acknowledge him as the natural heir.
Shahaji having no natural son, the kingdom of Satara was annexed to the British dominions as per the docrine of lapses. Then onwards the state of Kolhapur became the legitimate throne of Marathas as recognized by the British.
Post Shahaji , there were latter Chatrapatis at Satara but only as titular kings.
Venkatji (d.1864)adopted son.
Pratapsinha II aka Rajaram(1865-1874) adopted son.
Rajaram III (1874-1904) adopted son.
Anna sahib Natural son of Rajaram III.
Bhausaheb.(d.1925) Natural son of Rajaram III.Brother of Annasaheb.
Captain Shrimant Raja Shahu Pratapsinhji Bhonsle Chhatrapati Maharaj (1918-1950),aka Chandrasen Bhosale. Adopted son of Bhau saheb.
India became an independent Republic in 1947 and all Princely states were abolished including the state of Satara **.**

Addendum:

The Royal Bhosales of Akkalkot

Akkalkot is a principality in Solapur district,Maharashtra. It used to be the jagir (privy purse) of the Bhosale family.

Fatehsinh raje Bhosale(1707-60) was born as Ranoji Lokhande to Sayaji Lokhande, the Patil of Paradh,tal. Bhokardan,dist Jalna and the daughter of Suryaji Pisal (the killedar of Raigad, who was accused of opening the gates of the fort for the mughals) who was killed in a skirmish with the forces of Ch.Shahu of Satara. The king adopted his orphaned son and was given their family name of Bhosale.Fatehsinh became one of Shahus most loyal supporters and led any campaigns

in the south and against the Nizam ul Mulk. He could have also become the heir to the Satara throne, if he himself would not have declined it.
Shahajirao raje Bhosale (1760-89)nehew and adopted son.
Fattehsinhrao raje Bhosale II (1789-1822)son
Malojirao raje Bhosale (1822-28)son
Shahajirao raje Bhosale II (1828-57)son
Malojirao raje Bhosale II (1857-70)son.removed from direct administration by governor of Bombay.A administrator was appointed.
Shahajirao raje Bhosale III (1870-96)son. Reigned under administrator until coming of age.
Capt.Fatehsinhrao raje Bhosale III (1896-1923)adopted son.served in the British army.
Vijaysinhrao raje Bhosale (1923-52)son.acceded to the Indian union.Served in the state dept as a MLA and later dpty.minister of education.
Jaysinhrao raje Bhosale (1952-65)brother
Sumitraraje Bhosale (1965+)daughter

The Royal Dafles of Jath

Jath was a princely state (fiefdom) in Sangli district, Maharashtra. It was a part of Satara princely state. It was once the Deshmukhi of the royal Dafle (Chavan) family. The patriarch of the family was Lakhmajirao Yeldojirao Chavan (son of Yeldoji Chavan d.1665, who had married the daughter of Lakhojirao More, the Patil of Daflepur and was serving under Bijapur commander Abdul Bahlol Khan IV), who entered the service of Sultan Ali Adilshah of Bijapur and in return received the four mahals of Jath,Karjagi,Bardol,Vhanvad in 1672. He inherited his maternal grandfathers apellation 'Dafle'. Lakhmaji had two sons viz. Satvaji the eldest and Dhondji (He was kidnapped by the Mughal troops sent to subdue his brother.His descendents were granted the estate of Daflepur during the time of Ramrao I/1834 viz. Laxmibai Dafle served as a first class magistrate and subordinate judge.After her death the estate re-merged into Jath).

Satvajirao Dafle (1686-1706)son of Lakhmajirao. Entered into Bijapur service with a command of 6000 horse, 5000 footsoldiers and later after end of Adilshahi he became independent for sometime . But was later forced to enter into Mughal services(after his brother was kidnapped).The Mughal emperor granted him the Deshmukhi rights of his regions.
Yesubai Dafle(1706-54)sister in law succeded after the premature death of Satvajis sons.
Yeshwantrao Dafle(1754-59)grandson of Satvajirao.He entered the Mughal forces with a Mansab of 3000 horse and Faujdari of Jath.
Amritrao I Dafle(1759-90)son.
Khanajirao Dafle(1790-1810)son.Commander of 300 horse under the Marathas/Peshwa.Distinguished himself in the Karnataka campaign(especially Kurda campaign in 1795).
Renukabai Dafle(d.1822)Sr.wife
Salubai Dafle(1822-d.1833)Jr.wife
Ramrao I Dafle(1823-41)kin and adopted son by Salubai.
Bhagirathibai Dafle(1841-46) wife

Amritrao II Dafle(1846-92)kin and adopted son.Reigned under a administrator , till he came of age.He was given administrative powers in 1855, but were later revoked twice for maladministration.His wife Laxmibaisaheb served as regent.
Ramrao II Dafle(1892-1928)kin and adopted son.reigned under his adoptive mother till her death in 1897 and later a regency council until 1907 till he came of age.Promoted education,irrigation,banking,administrative reforms in his state.Served in the British army in WWI in the Jath division of Maratha light Infantry(territorial army scheme).
Lt Cmdr Vijaysinhrao Dafle(1928-1998)son.Served in the British army in WWII. He was a member of the 3rd round table conference,London. He served in the parliament post independence and introduced several administrative, social,health and public reforms in his state(along with his younger brother Ajinsinh).He was also a cricket player.He joined the Indian union in 1948. He died in 1998 and was survived by his two daughters.